

Ewe Proverbs - A Source of Imagery for Textile Designs

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Abstract

There have been several ways of generating ideas for textile designs and these comprise ideas from nature, environment and coined symbols from sayings especially from the “Akan” language where the “adinkra” symbols originated. These “adinkra” motifs or imagery have been excessively used and there is the need for new ones to be generated. It is upon this, that the researcher is exploring selected proverbs of the Ewe people to generate motifs to be used for both batik and textile print designs. The current symbols used by students and professional craftsmen were observed and examined to have first-hand information about their meaning and usage. The study collected and identified Ewe proverbs through opinion leaders and documented literature, which were developed into symbols or imagery suitable and appropriate for batik and textile design prints. Interview guide was used to collect data from students and stakeholders. The finding indicates that proverbs can be a source of inspiration for designers when generated into symbols. Secondly, the symbols when converted into product designs such as textiles, leather, ceramics, sculpture and painting works will bring variety to the market. Lastly, the symbols can serve as a document for referencing for students, professionals and craftsmen. The study shows that proverbs can be a source for generating symbols for textile design and other fields of art.

Keywords: Adinkra, craftsmen, proverbs, imagery and symbols.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

People of every race or culture have their own modes of communication. Some of these modes are the arts; sculpture, songs and drumming, but the most commonly used are verbal languages which include idioms and proverbs. Proverbs together with fables, folktales, folksongs and riddles are part of every spoken language and have been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

Proverbs are short pithy statements of homely pieces of wisdom, philosophy, or advice which have passed into general use. They are often expressed in metaphor, rhyme or alliteration based on some common human experiences. These folk sayings are often ironic or mocking in intention (Malcolm, 1949).

Proverbs contain keen observations of everyday life; they also constitute popular philosophies of life and provide an insight into human behaviour and character. Africans have been using both the visual and oral art forms for a considerable time to express, transmit and store their thought, emotions and attitudes. Visual images and objects are used symbolically to communicate knowledge, feelings and values.

Most African thoughts and languages are expressed in proverbs as can also be found in Ghanaian culture and traditions. These proverbs, idioms, fables and folktales are sometimes translated symbolically and applied to the daily lifestyles of the people. Such symbols are painted on walls and other mediums which include woven and printed fabrics.

Ewe Proverbs convey important ideas about human nature; they also teach about survival, health and social relations that transcend in their culture and origin.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

Related literature for every research topic is undertaken to help the researcher gather data to support the project. It provides the researcher with the necessary data to establish the areas worked on by others and the areas not tackled. The literature reviewed covered essential areas such as the definition and history of proverbs, purpose and symbolism of proverbs and its application in textile design.

2.1 Ethnographic Account of the Ewe

Ewe (Eweawó “Ewe people”, Evedukó “Ewe nation”) occupies south-eastern part of Ghana and the southern parts of neighbouring Togo and Benin. Oral tradition suggests that the Ewe immigrated into Ghana before the mid-fifteenth century. This area was colonized by the Germans and was originally called Togoland. Ewe religion is organized around a creator deity, “*Mawu*”, and over 600 other deities. Many village celebrations and ceremonies take place in honour of one or more deities. Coastal Ewe depend on fishing trade, while inland Ewe are usually farmers and keep livestock. The local variations in economic activities have led to craft specialization. The Ewe also weave *kente* cloth, often in geometrical patterns and symbolic designs that have been handed down through the ages. The Ewe people can be found in almost every town in Ghana (wikipedia.org).

The Ewes are essentially a patrilineal people; the founder of a community is the established chief, who is usually succeeded by his paternal relatives. The largest independent political unit is a chiefdom, the head of which is essentially a ceremonial figure assisted by a council of elders. Chiefdoms ranged in population from a few hundred people in one or two villages to several thousand in chiefdom with a large number of villages and surrounding countryside. The “Ewe” is a tonal language and changes in meaning can be brought about by tonal differences and have a peculiar consonants and digraphs. The Ewe like neighbouring Akan tribe wears *Kente* as their traditional cloth. They have a long history of weaving ‘*Kete*’ cloth, especially in Kpetoe (Gordon, 2005).

According to Awoonor (1974) African peoples use colour, pattern, materials and images, to communicate important information about cultural identity and belief systems. Unity among the Ewe is manifested in drums, music and dance, systems of worship, gods, conception of the world, and ritualistic patterns. Ewe arts focus on drumming and dance, ritual objects associated with Ewe traditional religion, appliqué and weaving. The use of images in textile design is connected to the proverbial wisdom, folklore and mythic traditions that undergird all aspects of Ewe traditional society.

2.2 Definition of Proverbs

Every country and language has its own stock of proverbs, and proverbs in our language today reflect every age and time. It contains keen observation of everyday life, constitute popular philosophy of life, and provide an insight into human behaviour and character.

According to the Columbia Electronic Encyclopaedia (2007) a proverb is a short statement of wisdom or advice that has passed into general use. More homely than aphorisms, proverbs generally refer to common experience and are often expressed in metaphor, alliteration, or rhyme. A proverb (from the Latin *proverbium*) is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity.

The above dictionary definitions suggests definitely that, a proverb is short, true, old and repeated sayings that portray the experience of human life through observation, challenges that have been expressed in images and songs for quick remembrance.

Writing on proverbs, Morris-Brown (1993) defines proverb as short excerpts from stories about life's lessons. They are stuffed with cultural symbolism which express important ideas about human nature, health and social relations that often transcend their culture of origin. Proverbs are timeless, succinct, clever, often funny and usually memorable.

According to Abdulai (1995) proverbs are wise saying and used in Africa as a form of communication. Most of these wise sayings usually employ symbols like animals, trees, the human body and objects present in the human environment using them as metaphors to communicate a message, example of an “Akan” Ghanaian proverb “*aboa oni dua, Nyame na opra ne ho*” which is literally translated as the animal that has no tail, God drives away its flies. The usage of these symbols, animal without a tail, God and flies to deliver such a message implies that even for those in life that are helpless, God will always provide. It is a message of hope for everyone.

Proverb is a concise and picturesque expression of a well-tried wisdom. Such statement made conveys a general truth. The writer also talks about the outlook of the people's life, life after death, arts and science which forms the level of intelligence. Every country has its own proverb and that can be seen in their everyday life through speeches or conversations and that is a hallmark of their linguistic culture and can be acknowledged in their language naturally (Ampem, 1998).

Bacon (2001) is of the view that proverbs are popular sayings which contain advice or state a generally accepted truth. Because most proverbs have their origins in oral tradition, they are generally worded in for easy remembrance and tend to change little from generation to generation.

Lange (2006) describe proverb as not only a short statement that reflect the thought and insight of a people into the realities of life but also a technique of oral expression. The writer further made mention of proverb being tradition, customs, heritage and also narrates the traditional background of the people as a seed nurtured and passed from generation to generation through ancestors.

The definitions given by the authors reveal that proverbs originated from stories about life lessons, nature, and social relation that outdo their culture of origin. It also brings about communication to the people in which symbols are used according to their immediate environment. Proverbs as the wisdom of the people can be likened unto a reservoir that is used for water storage before being supplied to different parts of the city in different quantities from the same source.

2.3 History of Proverbs

Proverbs, together with fables, folktales, folksongs and riddles, are part of every spoken language. They have been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, until they were recorded and became a folklore treasure for prosperity.

Bacon (2001) classified the collection of proverbs by tracing it as far back as ancient Egypt, about

2500B.C. The Old Testament attributed some 900 proverbs to the King Solomon of Israel (10th century B.C) as suggests Bacon. The Greek Philosopher Aristotle considers proverbs as being the survival of an older wisdom that have been systematically collected and classified. The Hellenistic period also saw proverbs being used by the rhetoricians for the adornment of speeches also collected.

There are thousands, perhaps millions, of African proverbs. New ones are still being composed and old ones are adapted or given new meanings to suit new situations. Anyone who is ingenious, that is, anyone who is creative, observant and has the ability to reflect and deduce a moral lesson from common happenings, can compose a proverb (Dzobo, 1975).

Nee Adjabeng Ankra (1966) notes that statements made in proverbs reflect true everyday occurrences. The writer further explained that proverbs have both a literal and deeper meaning which sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish proverbial discourse from sayings, idioms, riddles and puzzles. In particular, there is no clear cut and dried demarcation between proverbs and sayings. All may have hidden meanings that are difficult to discern. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish one genre from the other. A key difference between them lies in how they are typically used. Much of the idiomatic language and reflective thought of Africans is expressed in proverbs. In many ways, African traditional proverbs are like those of the people of other cultures. Although there are long proverbs, which seem more like short stories or poems, the overwhelming majority of African proverbs are short, pithy statements that contain ancient wisdom and experience.

2.4 Authority and Purpose of Proverbs

In Africa, proverbs are not usually ascribed to any particular individual, but rather to the ancestors collectively, the wise men and women of old. In most cases it is not known who composed a particular proverb. But whether or not the source is known, all proverbs are credited to the elders of old, even if a particular composer is still alive. In many African societies, when a proverb is cited, it is preceded with a statement like, "So said the elders. . . ." Proverbs contain experience, wisdom and valid counsel that are acknowledged by all. Thus, the collective thought, beliefs and values of the African people can be discerned from their proverbs (Dzobo, 1975).

Dzobo (1975) further points out that an Akan proverb which states that "God pounds fufu for the one-handed person" is a theological statement of the Akan's perspective about God's provision, loving kindness and gracious dealings with humankind. Other proverbs reflect the social structure of traditional African societies, for example, there are proverbs that suggest how to deal with elders, children, a spouse and so on; and there are some that indicate the position and role of various members of the society. The proverb: "When a woman rears a goat, it is a man who slaughters it," shows the position and role of the woman in our traditional society as a nurturing subordinate, but indispensable companion and partner of the man. Similarly, the proverb, "The stream-side drinking gourd does not make one die of thirst" (i.e. it saves one from dying of thirst), shows the importance of women in the created order; for it means that a man who has a wife at home will not die of hunger.

A close look at African traditional proverbial sayings shows clearly that the main concerns expressed in the proverbs relate to every aspect of human life. The ultimate purpose of the proverbs is to teach wisdom and moral lessons. Thus they contain, and are used to convey, moral lessons and advice on how to live a good and prosperous life. The proverbs touch on all conditions of life: wealth and poverty, health and sickness, joy and sorrow; occupations that include farming, hunting, fishing, building, trading and other kinds of activity like healing, cooking, walking, sleeping, marrying, childbearing, child-rearing. There are proverbs that concern all manner of people: kings and citizens, nobles and slaves, women and men, adults and children, apprentices and master craftsmen (Kudadjie, 1996).

Kudadjie further attest that African proverbs contain observations and good counsel against undesirable vices like anger, backbiting, greed, ingratitude, laziness, lying, pride, procrastination, selfishness, stealing and so forth. Many other proverbs also praise and advise people to cultivate virtues that promote progress and ensure wellbeing: circumspection, co-operation, gratitude, humility, patience, perseverance, prudence, respect and unity. They contain the experiences and wisdom of the people of old. New proverbs are composed by those who are observant, experienced, thoughtful and creative.

The experiences and wise counsel contained in the proverbs, according to Kudadjie, are derived from observations made about the nature and behaviour of human beings, animals, birds, plants, and other natural as well as supernatural objects and beings. Some of the proverbs state facts from the history, customs and practices of the people. In traditional African society, one can hardly hear anyone speak a few sentences without citing a proverb. For the initiated, the citing of proverbs comes naturally, without any conscious or special effort. This is as true during ordinary conversation as during formal and solemn discourse. However, proverbs tend to be more purposely cited during serious or formal discourse, such as during proceedings of the council of elders, a chief's court, arbitration, family meetings or during exhortations on how to live a morally good life.

According to Nee Adjabeng Ankra (1966) African proverbs can be used for several scholarly purposes. They can be used for the linguistic analysis of a particular language or dialect. Historical information as well as the thought, customs, beliefs and values of a society can be obtained through their proverbs. Besides, African

proverbs are a literary device used to embellish speech. This is because many of the idioms of an African language are embedded in its proverbs. As it were, African proverbs are used as sweeteners to communicate effectively. The writer points out that speaking without citing proverbs is like eating soup that has no salt in it. Proverbs are cited to confirm, reinforce or modify a statement; to heighten and attract attention to a point or message; or simply to summarize a speech. Sometimes, too they are used to communicate a fact or opinion that might be impolite or even offensive to state in direct speech or in plain language. They are also used to make people appreciate speech or to facilitate understanding and to generate conviction. As one Yoruba observation has it: "A proverb is the horse which can carry one swiftly to the discovery of ideas." Although all these varied uses are significant, they are in fact all means to a common end.

For a successful living, the opening verses in the book of proverbs (Proverbs 1: 2-6 TEV), states that, "Here are proverbs that will help you to recognize wisdom and good counsel, and understand sayings with deep meaning". Proverbs teaches how to live intelligently and how to be honest, just and fair. They can make an inexperienced person clever and teach young men how to be resourceful.

These proverbs can even add to the knowledge of wise men and give guidance to the educated, so that they can understand the hidden meanings of proverbs and the problems that wise men raise. "The one who heeds the voice of wisdom as revealed in the proverbs, and avoids the temptations listed, is assured the rewards of long and pleasant life, wealth, honour and happiness" (Proverbs 3: 16-17).

Perhaps the most important difference between proverbs and these other forms of speech is that every proverb contains some wisdom and good advice. Take for instance the proverb: "The one who is clothed in cotton wool does not hover over a flame." This has to do with temptation and discretion; it warns against foolishly exposing oneself to things that will ruin one's life. The many positive features of African proverbs make them most invaluable and unavoidable as instruments of teaching. At this point in Africa's history when there are cries everywhere for moral and social reform, the use of proverbs in moral education is urgent. Their use will help immensely to teach the truths of many biblical themes and stories, and to affect the moral, social and spiritual lives of the people for the better; for when a proverb is used correctly, it speaks to the intellect, the soul and the heart. It also gets them involved by using their imagination.

2.5 Symbolism of Proverbs

Proverbs are very impartial among the Ewe people as well as the other tribes in Ghana. Visual and oral symbolism has been used consciously and unconsciously for a considerable time as a form of communication as well as a store of knowledge. Visual images and objects are used symbolically to communicate knowledge, feeling and values among the traditional societies. A symbol is a sign which has further layers of meaning. In other words, a symbol means more than it literally says. Symbols can have three kinds of association, these are

Personal: We all have associations with things in our experience. One person may have strong affection for dogs while another person may fear them intensely.

Cultural: Different symbols may have quite different meanings in different cultures. A lion can represent Christ in Christian culture; in Sumerian culture, the sun represents the god Marduk. In Chinese culture, dogs represent devotion and faithfulness; in Islamic culture, they represent impurity.

Universal: Jungian psychology, along with other theories, argues that some symbols have universal meaning. Lions suggest deity in a variety of cultures, for instance. Trying to discern and express the universal meaning of a symbol is tricky.

Abdulai (1995) attest to the fact that proverbs and wise sayings are used in Africa as a form of communication which usually employ symbols present in the human environment, and these include animals, trees, the human body and other objects as metaphors to communicate a message.

Agbo (2006) defines symbol as a mark, sign or object looked upon as representing something. It can also be said to be anything that serves as an outward sign of something spiritual or material. Example of the 'cross' was used to demonstrate a symbol for Christians to represent Christ's crucifixion; the 'circle', in medieval thought, was a symbol of eternity because like eternity, it has neither a beginning nor an end. Symbolism is the representation of ideas by the use of signs, literary and artistic invention to express ideas, emotions and abstractions in place of realism. From the above definition, it is clear that a symbol generally stands for something visible: an object, a mark, a sign or an abstract idea.

In reference, Agbo defined a symbol as a pictorial representation of some abstraction to which is appended a name or motto. Basically, symbols are used for identification. They are used for various entities and activities in life and are therefore synonymous with the things they represent. In religious spectrum, the use of symbols plays a role of identification. Examples are candles, the cross and incense. Also in corporate institutions and modern patriotism, the use of logos, flags and coat of arms serve as symbols.

Carr-Gomm (1995) also defines symbols as an object, living or material that represents a concept. Many objects, however, take on a symbolic meaning only within a certain context, the symbolic meaning is not always the same, moreover, it cannot be assumed that the object is always a symbol; it may be included for aesthetic or

naturalistic reasons.

Design is an activity that translates an idea into a blue print for useful product, graphic, textile, a service or a process. Designers have the insight to combine these ideas and turn them into desirable results feasible for commercial successful value to people's lives. The writer further aired that design is significant in life and adds to beauty and transforms the existing condition into preferred ones. (Seymour, 2002)

2.6 Symbolic uses of proverbs

Fianko-Ntiamoah (1971) argues that symbols or symbolic articles are not made just for beauty of it. They have an important role to play in the community and serves as a unifying force of the people. The writer further explains that the power of symbols therefore is to evoke patterns of response and actions. The writer further explains that the symbolic value of a technique or art is the traditional mark or character which the article is supposed to depict taken as the conventional sign of some object, spirit, or idea. The art work may be a symbol designed purposely to express some ideas or to convey some messages usually in a proverbial way to the society. Many of such crafts are made to be used only during some specific state functions.

Indigenous Ghanaian art came about through thoughts and ideas that express and symbolize the values and beliefs of the people. Some of the symbols have definite explanation whereas others are a matter of opinion. Such symbols are represented among the traditional ethnic groups in Ghana and that includes textiles, pottery, stools, umbrella tops, spokesman staff, gold weights, jewellery, swords, architecture and many more. These date back to the prehistoric periods when men drew images on walls in caves for visual communication. In Ghana, the most prominent traditional symbols are the *adinkra* symbols. Apart from the *adinkra* symbols of the Asante which have been documented and used widely, there abound among other ethnic groups in Ghana, symbols of great significance. The Ewe, Ga and Fante along the coastal belt have a lot of symbols depicted in flags, printed or woven cloths and on their fishing boats or canoes. The ethnic groups in the Northern and Upper regions also have numerous and interesting symbols embroiled in their popular costumes (the smock or fuugu). They are also drawn on walls of their huts with various pigments and dyes. Unfortunately, most of such symbols are not documented and promoted for the appreciation of other people (Agbo, 2006).

Ewusi (1971) points out that the symbols in the flag are proverbial and to understand them, one has to be conversant with historical traditions of the area. This implies that proverbs are generated according to environmental setting of an area, what exist and not for the creating of the proverb and that makes it easier for one living or knowing the historical background to interpret or give meaning. According to Adu-Akwaboa (1992) mention is made of *adinkra* prints being produced locally by the indigenous printers with designed hand blocks. The design block depicts special symbols or motifs that have been derived from sayings and proverbial statements. The designs are printed on hand woven cotton fabric or dyed fabric.

The Encyclopedia of world Art (1987) describes *adinkra* production as printing decorative motif in black by means of a stamp on the cloth of white or unbleached cotton. It further explains the fact that *adinkra* symbols cover all aspects of man's life from history through psychology to philosophy, ranging from rites of passage, love, rivalry, marriage, bravery, backbiting, advice and consolation.

Wax prints and other cloth to a lesser degree have great communication value. They serve as a medium of expression on a variety of different levels that can be read by members of the community. Such women wearing named wax print show their wealth as and others to make a statement about personal relationship. It serves as a practice of an effective form of non-verbal communication (Bickford, 1994).

Yankah (1986) is of the view that the oral traditions of the Fante culture, feature *asafo* flags with distinguished renderings lively pictorial of local proverbs, of the Fante people of coastal Ghana manifest their rich oral traditions.

Upon reviewing the related literature on definitions and application of proverbs, it has come to light that proverbs have been used, in one way or the other, to serve utilitarian purposes from generation to generation. Symbols created from proverbs are limited in terms of the tribes and people of Ghana. The most depicted imageries are that of the *Akan* which have been used over a long period in woven cloth, prints cloth, dye cloth, appliqué cloth or flags, linguistic staffs and others. The researcher acknowledges the fact that the use of motifs or symbolically generated motifs could be used by textile designers to explore different styles and techniques in textiles. The scope of creating motifs from proverbs of other tribes or languages in Ghana can foster a wide range of products for the Ghanaian market and beyond.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This section explains and discusses the various procedures followed to collect the beneficial data for the study. It entails the research design i.e. the qualitative research methods. It also involves library research where most secondary data for the study were gathered. This section also deals with survey instruments and the population studied.

3.1 Research Design

A research may be classified as qualitative and quantitative in nature. According to Best (1981) qualitative research approach is usually based on quality rather than quantity as the case may be for quantitative research approach. Best further opines that, qualitative research study is the type in which the description of observation is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms. In other words, it does not imply that numerical measures are never used in qualitative research but it is not largely dependent on numbers. Qualitative research in relation to this study aims at experimentation, manipulation, description, analysis and the interpretation of some selected Ewe proverbs to obtain textile designs of appreciable results that can be assessed qualitatively by the researchers for the study. The research mainly used descriptive based research methods of qualitative research approach.

3.2 Descriptive Research Method

The Descriptive Survey method of research was used for the study. This method was used extensively to collect, collate and interpret data. It was also used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe “what exists” with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. But it can only describe “who, what, when, where and how” of a situation, not what caused it. It provides the number of times something occurs, or frequency, lends itself to statistical calculations such as determining the **average** number of occurrences or central tendencies (*Descriptive Research*, 2008). Therefore, descriptive survey was used when the objective is to provide a systematic description of the phenomenon that is as factual and accurate as possible. It was employed to observe the use of symbols in terms of designing in the Art Faculty. Moreover, descriptive survey was also employed to solicit information to ascertain the significance and factors in the generation of symbols for designing. As a result, descriptive statistics were represented in tables, analysed and recommendations made.

3.3 Library Research

Both the empirical and the theoretical reviews of literature were obtained from the following libraries aside information gathered from the internet and software databases:

1. KNUST Main and Associate Libraries
2. British Council Library (Kumasi Library)
3. Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon

3.4 Population for the Study

Sidhu (1984) defines population as the complete set of individuals, objects or events having common observable characteristic in which the researchers are interested. The target population studied includes students from the Faculty of Industrial Art (FIA) Textiles, Metal product design, and Ceramics and that of Faculty of Fine Art (FFA) Sculpture and Painting in KNUST. Moreover, opinion leaders such as Professional Craftsmen, Lecturers and Spokesmen for traditional rulers were also canvassed to give first-hand information. The accessible population sampled for the study is evident in Table 3.1.

3.5 Sampling

According to Quartey and Awonyo (2002), sampling is a subset of the population and consists of individuals, objects or events that form the population. The sample selected is fair and adequate and represent the entire population of interest. In this research, the accessible population for the study is heterogeneous in nature. The heterogeneity of accessible population was treated under proportional stratified sampling using stratum to identify each of the strata which come in different representations. Consequently, each category in the population will be treated as a stratum. Leedy (1974) asserts that for quality research, at least 30% of the accessible population is a fair representation for acceptable results. It also enables the researcher to lower the variance of the research.

Table 3.1: Accessible Population

Population for the study	Accessible Population
Dept. Industrial Art (Students)	
Textiles	20
Ceramics	10
Metals	10
Faculty of Fine Art (Students)	
Sculpture	10
Painting	10
Opinion Leaders	
Spokesmen	4
Professional craftsmen	4
Lecturers	4
Total Population	72

Table 3.1 shows the schematic diagram of the stratification of the accessible population into 8 strata. Out of the 72, 36 were randomly sampled for the study. The following (Table 3.3) illustrates a schematic overview of the proportional stratified and sampling procedure used to randomly sample 36 respondents for the study.

Table 3.2: Stratification of Accessible Population

Strata	Population for the Study	Accessible Population
	Dept. Industrial Art (Student)	
ST - 1	Textiles	20
ST – 2	Ceramics	10
ST – 3	Metal	10
	Faculty of Fine Art (Students)	
ST – 4	Sculpture	10
ST – 5	Painting	10
	Opinion Leaders	
ST – 6	Spokesmen	4
ST – 7	Professional craftsmen	4
ST – 8	Lecturers	4
	Total Population	72

Table 3.3: Schematic Diagram of the Proportional Stratified Sampling Design

Population level	Total Population							
	ST1	ST2	ST3	ST4	ST5	ST6	ST7	ST8
Proportional Stratification level	20	10	10	10	10	4	4	4
Randomisation Level (Sampling) 50%	10	5	5	5	5	2	2	2
Total Randomised Stratified Sample (Data Level)	36							
* ST – Stratum								

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collections were carried out in two phases. Phase one and two comprise of observation and interview respectively as a method of data collection known as triangulation. The researcher was able to address the interview guide thoroughly with the interviewees to ascertain the objective of the project and was able to participate in the procedures the craftsmen executed the works professionally. With the use of triangulation, the researcher was able to draw on the unique strengths of each (observation or interview) – thus providing both macro-and micro-level perspectives in a single project.

3.7 Observation

The natural way of gathering information is by observation and it is most direct in terms of studying people

when one is interested in the explicit behaviour and the result achieved or obtained is real and precise through mechanical and electronic means (Sidhu, 1984). Participant and non-participant observation are the two main forms of observation. The former deals with the behaviour of a person or a group of persons and the researcher play an active role in the said situation and record the action or procedure of work. The researcher on the other hand can be an observer and not part of the group performing the action. The researcher was part of the processing action and also partly as an observer during dyeing and printing processes. The latter (non-participant) is the type of observation in which the investigator or researcher is not directly concerned in the activities or situation being observed. The researcher also employed the non-participant for which he observed textile designs prints from the market and observed symbolic motifs used for decorating walls, badges for schools and other institutions in the Kumasi Metropolis. The approach helped the researcher to generate motifs to execute and accomplish the project.

3.8 Interview

The second phase of the primary data collection consists of interviews. In quantitative research studies, survey research, however, interviews are fairly structured (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Adgedu et al (1999) explains that interview is a face to face meeting between a questioner and a respondent. It is an oral questionnaire which often used in collecting data for descriptive studies and action research. Interview according to this source is superior to other data collection devices in the sense that response rate is high and issues can be clarified. Respondents are usually willing to talk than write and thus provide immediate response. Moreover, the key reason for using interview is that it allowed the researcher to clarify ambiguous answers and, when appropriate, seek follow-up information.

Interview guide was designed in this regard. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explained that in a semi-structured interview, the research may follow the standard questions (interview guide) with one or more individual tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning. Interview was used to solicit data from stakeholders from the Art Faculty in KNUST and Ewe opinion leaders as mentioned in table 3.1.

3.9 Validation of Instruments

The interview guide was structured and administered to elicit data for this study. The interview guide targeted the following prospective respondents such as students from the Industrial and Fine Art Faculty, lecturers, opinion leaders and professional craftsmen. In effect, the interview guide was vetted by scrutiny, criticism and suggestions to avert ambiguity of words and syntax. Subsequently, the final interview guide was validated by the researcher's supervisor in agreement with the researcher.

3.10 Administration of Instruments

Interview was conducted to elicit information from students and opinion leaders. This was attained with a structured interview guide.

3.11 Data Collection Procedures

With the interview, respondents especially the opinion leaders were first informed through telephone conversation and subsequently served with the structured interview guide prior to the time of the interview. Respective interview time was scheduled with each one of them. Recording of the meeting times with the respondents was done via a mobile phone with a recording facility.

Table 3.4: Administered interviewees' response

No. of Administered Interview	No. of Respondents	Percentage
36	36	100%

3.12 Data Analysis Plan

The analysis of data collected from the interview is in facets. Basically, the technique of presentation of findings adopted was descriptive statistics in which the findings were presented in tables. The interview with students and opinion leaders examined the significance and factors to ascertain the use of symbols for design work. In the first part, copies of answered interview were coded as variables and cases, and then analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientist software (SPSS 15.0 Version). The analysis of findings was presented in three sections: demographic information of respondents; secondly, concepts on Proverbs; and lastly, information on textile design, in terms batik and textile designing. This survey was done to solicit information to ascertain the use of Ewe proverbs to create symbols or imagery in the production of batik and textile design.

The next section, discusses the findings from data collected through interviews conducted and was looked at extensively and summary of main findings made.

3.13 Discussion of findings

In total, there were 36 respondents in the surveys conducted. These surveys were open to students, Professionals and lecturers. Further, out of the 36 respondents, 30 respondents form students and 6 were the professionals and lecturers interviewed.

3.13.1 Data collected from Students

Lewis Antony (2007) defined demographic as a statistic characterizing human populations or segments of human populations broken down by age or sex or income, among others. This Section discussed issues of gender class in Table 3.5.

Looking at the distribution in Table 3.5 between male 56.7% and female 43.3%, it indicated no bias in the administered interview but only reflected male/female ratio in school enrolment. This marginal difference however, shows gender equity in this study.

Table 3.5: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	17	56.7	56.7	56.7
	Female	13	43.3	43.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

Subsequently, detailed description of the students' representations according to their subject areas is shown in Table 3.6. Respondents were selected from the Textiles, Metals, Ceramics, Sculpture and Painting from the Faculty of Industrial Art and Fine Art.

Table 3.6: Programme of Study and Faculty

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Textiles	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Metals	5	16.7	16.7	50.0
	Ceramics	7	23.3	23.3	73.3
	Sculpture	3	10.0	10.0	83.3
	Painting	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

In table 3.7, the third and fourth year represents 50% respectively declares the result not to be bias. There was a fair representation of the students.

Table 3.7: Year of Students' Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Year 3	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Year 4	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

Section B: Concepts on Proverbs

To ascertain respondents' knowledge level of the subject matter, whether they have any knowledge of the term proverb and what proverb is? Table 3.8 reported 100% for respondents' affirmative answer to the topic.

Table 3.8: Respondents' understanding of Proverb

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

From table 3.9 the respondents' had a fair knowledge of the definition of a proverb and were able to give brief answer to the question. From the answers given, the researcher had every reason to explore this subject matter.

Table 3.9: Respondents' definition on Proverb

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Is a brief saying	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Is a wise saying	12	40.0	40.0	56.7
	Is a statement made out of experience	8	26.7	26.7	83.3
	A short quote made to give an advice	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

In Table 3.10, to determine whether respondents know about the use of proverbs in designing, the answers given meant that they had a fair idea of its usage which include art and craft forming 56.7% and 43.3% indicated decoration.

Table 3.10: Respondents' view for proverbs in designing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	For art and craft work	17	56.7	56.7	56.7
	For decorations	13	43.3	43.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

For Table 3.11, the answer to the product designs made from proverbs in Textiles, Leather, Wood and Sculpture; there was 100% indicating that the respondents are all aware of proverbs.

Table 3.11 Responses from product designs of Proverbs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

Subsequently, the respondents were asked if they have used any proverbial symbol to produce any art work. From the results, the Yes had 80% and the No 20% as indicated Table 3.12. This indicates the high patronage in the use of the proverbial symbols in various arts and craft works.

Table 3.12 Respondents' use of Proverbs to produce work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	24	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

Table 3.13 shows the high patronage in proverbs which serves as a suitable source of inspiration for the creation of artistic products and response was 100%.

Table 3.13: Respondents' view of artistic products on Proverbs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

In addressing the usage of proverbs and the purpose it serves, the response derived indicate that it will enrich Ghanaian culture, serve as an educative material and lastly, for the creation of art designs; with the percentages of 43.3, 26.7 and 30 respectively as shown in Table 3.14.

Table 3.14: Respondents' suggestions on purpose proverb will serve

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It will enrich Ghanaian culture	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
	It will serve as an educative material	8	26.7	26.7	70.0
	Could be used for the creation of art designs/forms	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

For recommendation and the use of proverbs in design generation 100% was realized and makes it prominent as an indicator for the researcher to embark on this project. Table 3.15 contains the results.

Table 3.15: Response to recommend the use of proverb for design work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

In Table 3.16, 60% stated that it will be used as an advertising material, 40% were of the opinion that it will enhance traditional and custom made images. These explain the tremendous benefits derived from generating Ewe proverbs into symbols or imagery for such purposes in designing.

Table 3.16: Respondents' view on proverbial symbols on field of study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	As an advertising tool	18	60.0	60.0	60.0
	As a traditional or custom made image	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

The patronage of proverbial symbols for art and craft works was affectionate giving a result of 100% in table 3.17.

Table 3.17: Respondents' opinion on proverbial symbol patronage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	30	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

3.13.2 Data collected from Opinion leaders/ Professionals

The section looks at professionals, lecturers and craftsmen and the knowledge they have in conjunction with the topic for discussion. Looking at the distribution in table 3.18 between male 83.3% and female 16.7%, it indicates no bias in the administered interview but only reflects male female ratio in the field of specialization. This marginal difference however, shows gender equity in this study.

Table 3.18: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	5	83.3	83.3	83.3
	Female	1	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

In terms of specialization, interview was granted equally to the groups involved and the response was 33.3% as indicated in table 3.19 representing a fair playing field for the project.

Table 3.19: Field of specialization

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Art Lecturers	2	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Chief's Spokesman	2	33.3	33.3	66.7
	Professional Craftsmen	2	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

To ascertain respondents' knowledge level of the subject matter, whether they have any knowledge of the term proverb and what proverb is? Respondents answer for Table 3.20 reported 100% in affirmative.

Table 3.20: Respondents' view on Ewe proverb

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

On the matter of documentation in table 3.21 the responses on "Partially" ended 33.3%, and "Not all but few" was 16.7% and not really sure was 50%. From the answers given, the researcher had every reason to explore this subject matter.

Table 3.21: Respondents' knowledge on proverb documentation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Partial documentation	2	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Not all but few	1	16.7	16.7	50.0
	Not really sure	3	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

To determine respondents' idea about the usage of proverbs in the Ewe society, the answers given meant that they had a fair idea of its usages which include art and craft forming 50.0% as to advise of 33.3% and finally on admonishing 16.7% as given in table 3.22.

Table 3.22: Respondents' view on the use of Ewe Proverbs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To advise	2	33.3	33.3	33.3
	For admonishing	1	16.7	16.7	50.0
	For art and craft	3	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009 The answer to the product designs application made from proverbs for works in textiles, leather, wood and sculpture there was 100% indicating that the professionals were aware of proverbs and its usage indicated in table 3.23.

Table 3.23: Respondents' view on product design application

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009 In addressing the usage of proverbial symbols and the significance it serves, the response derived indicate that it will enrich Ghanaian culture, serve as an educative material for documentation finally for communication the score in percentages were 50.0%, 16.7 and 33.3% respectively as shown in table 3.24.

Table 3.24: Respondents' views on Proverbial symbols in textile design

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Portray one's culture	3	50.0	50.0	50.0
	For documentation	1	16.7	16.7	66.7
	For communication	2	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

For recommendation and the use of Ewe proverbs in design generation was 100% as indicated in table 3.25.

Table 3.25: Respondents' view on Ewe designs for textile

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

In Table 3.26, 50% responded that the generation of the symbols should be base upon the environmental settings and everyday life of the people. 33% went for the knowledge and ability of the designer and 16.7% suggested the use of associated designs that people are familiar with. The researcher upon the response and suggestions gathered would act assiduously to come out with meaningful imagery.

Table 3.26: Respondents' opinion on symbol generating

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Environmental settings and everyday life	3	50.0	50.0	50.0
	General Knowledge and ability of the designer	2	33.3	33.3	83.3
	Symbols associated with people	1	16.7	16.7	100.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Environmental settings and everyday life	3	50.0	50.0	50.0
	General Knowledge and ability of the designer	2	33.3	33.3	83.3
	Symbols associated with people	1	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

Table 3.27 gives the benefits the proverbial symbols will serve and that comprises the store of knowledge and also as an advertising tool and finally as a heritage to the country and society with 16.7%, 50% and 33.3% respectively. These explain the tremendous benefits derived from generating Ewe proverbs into symbols or imagery for purposes of designing.

Table 3.27: Respondents' suggestions of Ewe proverbial symbols

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Will serve as a store of knowledge	1	16.7	16.7	16.7
	As an advertising tool	3	50.0	50.0	66.7
	As a heritage	2	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	6	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, August-October 2009

3.13.3 Main Findings

This survey was designed to solicit information to ascertain the use of Ewe proverbs as a means of generating symbols or imagery for textile designs.

The following are some main observations made:

1. Apparently, close to 95% of respondents were aware of proverbs and have used it as a spoken word but its usage in the work of art and craft were made up of less than 50%
2. Respondents on the documentation of the ewe proverbs were below 50% because they used words like partial, not sure and just a few.
3. Close to 96% of the respondents defined the Proverb which was quite impressive and motivated the researchers to go all out for the project.
4. Respondents' suggestions on the use of Ewe proverbs as imagery for textile design and other arts and crafts was encouraging to about 90%.
5. Respondents properly enumerated some advantages to which the use of Proverbs will benefit the nation and society and keep the cultural value of the people involved.

The extensive responses from the survey sorted in many different ways, dissected and analyzed to an exhaustive or conclusive dimension, offered a broader view of trends and patterns that borders on Proverb awareness and uses. However, students close to 83% forming a preponderance of respondents' population exhibited some knowledge and skills of enormous benefits Proverbs has to offer. In view of the findings, it can be acknowledged that there is the need to generate more symbols that can be used in the field of designing. This project seeks to generate motifs for designing in textiles and other field of designing. This research seeks to produce symbols and imagery to augment the "adinkra" symbols and other generated motifs in use.

Proverbs are the wisdom of a people. It is wisdom which has been distilled from experiences made over the years, which, when taken seriously, can equip people to live wisely and well.

The researcher upon careful survey and methodology used for the study and response deduced have the impression that proverbs will be a source of inspiration to generate symbols or motifs to produce textile designs and other art and craft designs.

Symbol is a sign or an abstract idea in the form of object or group of objects. Upon careful observation and idea gathering, the researcher deduced symbols from the following:

1. The environment and societal setting.
2. Spoken word through communication.
3. Experience and creativity.
4. Abstract and semi-abstract forms.

The researcher applied all the deduction made from the study to generate the symbols or imagery for the project. The motifs or symbols generated were in abstract and semi-abstract forms and these are easier to apply in design works such as textile, ceramic, wood, metal and sculpture works.

Below are some selected Ewe proverbs which are literally translated in English and followed with an explanation of words and phrases. Meaning and moral values with their corresponding symbols or imagery generated.

1. **Ati ḍeka me w̄na ave o.** [A single tree cannot make a forest]

A single tree in the proverb refers to an influential, prominent elderly or rich person in society e.g., a King, President or Chief. The forest also refers to an institution, family or community. The proverb therefore depicts that a rich or prominent person alone cannot constitute a family, region, state or nation. There are forest areas in the Ewe land, and during the farming season it calls for communal spirit and team work. The symbol depicts a big tree surrounded by four small ones on its sides.



Fig.4.1:Ati ḍeka (One tree)

Moral value: The proverb teaches against over-reliance on individual efforts but advocate on cooperation, unity among the people to achieve set goals. It inculcates teamwork and communal spirit among the people.

2. **Ne atiaḁe le nya ḁim ƳesiaƳi le fiáwoḁuti la, mumu ye le dzrom.** [A tree which uses to provoke axes wishes to be cut down.]

The tree is used here to depict a humankind whereas the axe also used here as a corrective tool. Therefore if a person does things wrongly the tool is used as a standard for correction. The axe is used to cut or prune down trees that go beyond bonds and that which cannot able to bear fruits. The symbol depicts a partly chopped tree branch with an axe.



Fig.4.2: Mumu dzrom. (Destroyer)

Moral value: The proverb teaches about wrong doing and the aftermath being punishment and chastisement. It encourages mankind to see challenges as part of the pruning process in life but not as a punishment.

3. **Ge me tu na xo na aḁaba o.** [The beard cannot tell much to the eyebrow about the past.]

The beard and the eyelash forms part of the facial beauty of humankind, but the latter is visible during childbirth whereas the former develop later. Therefore the eyelash is said to be older, knowledgeable and experienced than the beard as expressed in the proverb. The symbol depicts an eyelash and a beard.



Fig.4.3:aḁaba(Eyelash)

Moral value: The proverb teaches about humility and respect. The youth are to obey their elders and parents, whereas apprentices should humble themselves to their masters. Subordinates and students should take instructions from their bosses and instructors respectively.

4. **Af̄o me yina nugbe eye agogotsi naafe o.** [The foot does not go on a mission and leaves the thigh at home.]
The symbol depicts an abstract figure of feet and thigh.



Fig.4.4: Afɔ yinugbe (The foot on a mission)

Considering the leg in totality, it is made of the thigh, knee, calf and the foot and all these joined to the hip bone, and therefore the foot and the thigh cannot be isolated. As the leg moves all other parts are put to action or motion

Moral value: It teaches about teamwork and reciprocity. Upon that set goals are achieved through co-operate effort.

5. **Zegoyibo me ye akatsaYi la do go tso.** [The white porridge comes out of the black pot].The Symbol depicts a cooking pot on a tripod.

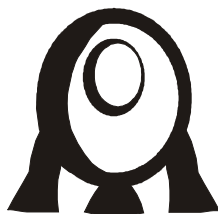


Fig.4.5: Zegoyibo (The black pot)

White signifies pure whereas black is evil or impure as character trait. The black pot is a container in which the white porridge is prepared; therefore white and black when used produce credible results.

Moral value: The proverb signifies the inner and outward character of humanity. It cautions people to rather look for the inner rather than the out-ward character since the outward can be very deceptive. It counsel for humility and patience to judge.

6. **Ne nkugbagbatɔde be ye le ekpe da ge la, efeafɔ le ekpe la dzixoxo.** [When a blind says that he will throw a stone, he has surely a foot on a stone already.]

The symbol depicts a blind person with the foot on a stone.



Fig.4.6: nkugbagbatɔ (The blind person)

The blind is one who has lost the sight, but the other senses are well developed to hear, taste and touch. The foot on a stone refers to the strength, practice and experience the person had undergone in life and upon it that performance can be achieved. Therefore a solid foundation brings out results in one's life.

Moral value: It teaches about hard work, determination and self motivation. Humankind should practice whatever they find doing, doing well and by putting cautious effort will yield good results.

7. **Agaga lolo me fle na agaga eve fe nu o.**[One big cowry cannot be used to pay for two cowries.] The symbol depicts one big cowry.



Fig.4.7: Agaga lolo (the big cowry)

Cowry signifies money. Every cowry has special features and that determines the value of it, therefore one big one cannot be valued for the price of two cowries. The physical strength of mankind cannot be the basis of his or her wealth but the person must be looked at in totality.

Moral value: The proverb teaches about accommodating one another since everyone has a price tag on him or her. It counsel people to have respect for each other to make the world a better place to live.

8. **Du adewofegbagba ye nye du adewofe tutu.** [The downfall of some nations enables the raise of other nations.] The symbol depicts falling and upright building.



Fig.4.8: Du gbagbafē tutu (Destroyed and rebuilding of town)

The downfall of a nation refers to the collapse, ruin, or breakdown of a policy, constitution or rule. Therefore upon such collapse other learn of their mistakes, tragedy or calamity to amend their ways.

Moral value: The proverb admonishes individuals, communities and nations to be aware of other people's misfortunes and learn from them. It also encourages people to be steadfast and careful in decision making.

9. **Adeḡitsa kplelāḡitsa ye do na go.** [A very experienced hunter will surely meet one day a very experienced wild animal.] The symbol depicts an animal claws pierced with a spear.



Fig.4.9: Adeḡitsa (Experienced hunter)

An experienced hunter is one with much skill and knowledge in hunting whereas the wild animal also knows its terrain and route to escape. Therefore it takes much more skill on one part to outwit the other.

Moral value: It teaches people not to boast of their achievements in life, but rather learn more from others since in life everyone has gone through life with various degrees of experiences off their sleeves.

10. **Tōmedela ye gba na ze.** [Only the one who kindly accepts to fetch water may unwillingly break the pot.] The symbol depicts water fetchers with broken pot.



Fig.4.10: Tōmedela (water drawer)

Water drawer refers to the professional of various skills and their ability in the jobs they offer to the public or individuals. The pot is the container used for drawing the water. Such, would be attributed to the carpenter, mason, mechanic and printers tools used to execute work.

Moral value: The proverb brings to light the mistakes being committed consciously or unconsciously by the handlers of the job, and such people should not be unfairly blamed for their mistakes. It also teaches people to tolerate accidental situations and encourage the culprits.

The Ewe proverbs, just like any other, is to give people a sense of what is right and wrong and teach them how to behave in a society. All of them share common ground because they are here to teach us the same values and to help us have judgement. Proverbs have many uses in Ewe societies.

- I. They usually express an eternal truth.
- II. They are a warning against foolish acts or a guide to a person's good conduct.
- III. Proverbs has much to teach about finding favour with kings and those in the government.
- IV. Proverbs is a deterrent to crime, and teaches that pain is deserved and dare not seek to reduce it. They also bring special meaning to certain situations and even solve particular problems as captured in the moral values.

Ewe proverbs were used to portray the philosophy of life to people by building on the wisdom and experience of the past. Proverbs taught moral values, modes of conduct, religious, political and social beliefs, respect for elders, and also served as means of communication.

These generated selected imagery or symbols derived from the Ewe proverbs were used for the execution for the main project in chapter five. Selected motifs were used in producing batik works and the

designing of textile prints.

PRODUCTION AND EVALUATION OF BATIK AND TEXTILE PRINT DESIGNS

Batik is a way of colouring fabric with successive dye baths, producing a design by using wax to resist dyes on cloth. The researcher selected a few motifs generated from the Ewe proverbs and with careful selection of tools and materials for the production of batik.

5.1 Designing of Batik

Design can also be said to be preliminary conception of an idea that is to be carried into effect by action. Meaning, the design is basically a plan of action taken in solving a calculated manner of an idea. Designing is therefore a creative process that involves assigning or translating ideas that have been conceived in the mind into concrete form. Textile designing is also not an exception as far as design concepts are concerned, involving creativity just as all the various art disciplines.

In this project, the researchers have coined designs from selected Ewe proverbs in an attempt to broaden the sources of generating designs for textiles. In the execution, certain factors were considered. These are outlined and explained as follows;

- The design concept for the batik production was based on the elements and principles of design applicable to batik works of high aesthetic value. There was interplay of lines, dots, shapes, texture, and colour in conformity with design principles such as rhythm, balance, unity, contrast, harmony, repetition, dominance, proportion and variety where necessary to obtain results.
- For the batik project, the motifs derived from the Ewe proverbs were selected based on abstract and semi abstract forms to accomplish such works.
- The design concept was in compliance with the batik to be produced with suitable matching symbols selected for specific works. However, depending on the philosophical meaning of a particular work, the researcher chose abstract and geometrical forms of designs.
- Different tools and techniques were employed by the researcher for the designing and executing of the project.

5.2 Production of batik works

The creation of the different samples of batik works were based on sketches and drawings made from selected Ewe proverbs. The motifs were based on abstract and semi-abstract concepts which were cut out from plywood and latex foam in relief to produce wooden and wax printing foam stamps. In this section the researchers describe the systematic procedure followed in creating each project work.

5.2.1 Materials and Tools

The researchers used the following tools and materials to execute the work;

- Paraffin wax: a white waxy solid mixture of hydrocarbons used in textiles to resist dye penetration at localized areas of the fabric.
- Wooden and foam stamps, sketch instruments and a waxing table.
- Cotton fabric (mercerized fabric)
- Vat dyes: a water insoluble dye that can be chemically be reduced and fixed by oxidation after being taken up by fibres.

5.2.2 General Procedure

The procedure followed in executing the batik works for the project were; design concept, preparation of wooden and latex foam of both engraved and relief stamps, transferring the design onto fabric, application of molten wax, preparation of vat dye, dyeing of fabric and finally, dewaxing, washing and ironing.

Step 1: Design Concept

The design concept for the batik project was developed from the motifs that were generated from Ewe proverbs.

Step 2a: Preparation of wooden stamps

Items used for the construction of the wooden stamps include:

- Adhesive (PVA)
- Plywood ($\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch)
- Jigsaw(Manual and electric)
- Nails(1 and 2 inches)
- Pencil

Step 2b: construction of wooden stamp

The following describe how the construction of the wooden stamps evolved:

- The symbols derived from the proverbs were sketched on $\frac{1}{8}$ inch plywood of 5x3 or 4x4 inches squares depending on the makeup of the symbol in question or the motif size to be achieved.

- After sketching and defining the outline of the motif, a hole was created in the plywood with a punch. The designs were carefully cut out from the plywood into templates. The cut out templates form the positive or relief motif whereas the hollowed portion forms the negative or engraved motif.
- The cut out design were lightly applied with PVA on one side using a piece of wood which were allowed to dry for some few minutes. The cut- out design was pasted onto the ½ inch base plywood. A wooden board and a concrete block were placed on the design for 45minsto ensure effective fixing. The glued designs were removed and further secured with one (1) inch nails at the corners of the stamp with regards to the engraved types, whereas the delicate areas of the relief stamps were reinforced with the nails.
- After the designs have been firmly fixed, wooden handles were fixed at the back of the stamps and secured with glue and two (2) inch nails.

Step 3: Transferring the design onto the fabric

The motif or symbols were transferred onto the fabric with the aid of a 2B pencil. This required sketching the designs to serve as a guide for the application of molten paraffin wax. The sketch was done following a predetermined repeat pattern for proper organization of motifs.

Step 4: Application of molten wax onto the fabric

- A slab of paraffin wax was chopped into small pieces and heated in a metallic bowl to melt. The molten wax was then applied onto the plain fabric with a piece of latex foam to resist dye penetration during dyeing.
- The wooden stamps were used in applying molten wax in selected areas of the fabric. The application of the wax with stamps was repeated to cover predefined areas in the fabric in conformity with the entire design.
- After the wax application, the fabric was dyed, oxidized and dried. The dried fabric was re-waxed to resist and to retain some portions of the first dyed colour and leaving other portions to take-up the second dye. The waxing and dyeing processes were to achieve all the colours in the designs.

Step 5: Preparation of Vat Dye

Vat dyes was prepared by dissolving each dyestuff in a small rubber container with warm water and stirred thoroughly to dissolve the dye. Sodium hydroxide was added gradually while stirring continued. Sodium hydrosulphite was finally added and stirred. The quantities of the sodium hydroxide, sodium hydrosulphite and the dyestuff were in the ratio 2:2:4. That is, two (2) table spoons of dye, two (2) table spoons of sodium hydroxide and four (4) table spoons of sodium hydrosulphite in dyeing a two (2) yards of fabric. For a three yard fabric, the dye to chemical ratio used was 3:3:6.

Step 6: Fabric dyeing

The following steps show the sequence for the dyeing of the fabrics;

- The already prepared dye solution was poured into a dye bath containing four litres of water and the solution stirred thoroughly.
- The fabric was immersed in cold water to wet it. Excess water was squeezed out and then immersed in the dyeing liquor for 15 to 30 minutes.
- Depending on the shade required, the fabric was removed and spread out in an open shaded area away from direct sunlight for oxidation to take place for the true colour of the dye to develop.
- The dyeing processes were repeated each time the fabric was waxed. Lighter shades were dyed first followed by the darker shades; i.e. yellow, green and violet respectively.

Step 7: Dewaxing and Ironing

After dyeing the final colour, the next stage was dewaxing. The fabric was immersed in hot boiling water to remove the wax. This was done with the help of two sticks used in lifting and tossing the fabric in the hot water to melt and remove the wax out from the fabric. The fabric was then removed and washed in warm soapy water, rinsed in cold water, dried and ironed.

5.3.1 Project One

The design concept was derived from the proverb “Ame ɲto fe aba vuvu me di na nya Na ame o” meaning, no one can be in trouble on his own worn-out bed. The motifs consists of both engraved and a relief wooden stamped design. The vat dyes used in the executing of the project were light green and brown colours. Textures in the fabric was achieved with two wooden stamps; a semi tooth gear design and a straight thin plywood with nodes placed at equal interval. The constructed wooden blocks or stamps were executed as indicated in the general procedure.

The fabric (two yards) was laid on the waxing table. A straight wooden edge was placed diagonally on the fabric and the relief type of the wooden stamp immersed in the molten wax, shaken and printed along the straight edge leaving a stamp size space between the motifs. The straight edge was moved and rolled along the fabric four (4) times and stamping continued to cover the whole fabric.

After waxing, the fabric was dyed in light green vat liquor prepared as discussed in the general procedure. The dyed fabric after oxidation and drying was waxed again with the engraved stamp. The fabric was textured with semi-gear motif alongside a serrated stamp within the main motif.



Plate 5.1: “Aba vuvu” [worn-out bed]

The waxed fabric was again dyed in brown vat liquor for 15 minutes. The fabric was removed, oxidised and rinsed in cold water followed by dewaxing. The fabric was finally dried and ironed as seen in Plate 5.1.

Evaluation: “Abavuvu” [worn-out bed]

The batik fabric in Plate 5.1 is derived from the Ewe proverb “Ame ɲto fe aba vuvu me di na nya na ame o” meaning, no one can be in trouble on his own worn-out bed. It is titled “**Abavuvu**” [worn-out bed]. The batik was produced on two (2) yards cotton fabric. The motifs were arranged diagonally in the fabric and textured with stamp blocks of semi circle serrated gear patterns. The design depicts an abstract person in a relaxed manner forming part of the main motifs. The design is composed of elements such as lines, shapes, dots and colour arranged artistically to achieve rhythm, balance, unity, movement, variety, repetition and dominance. Geometric patterns including circles, triangles, rectangles, and squares create movements, unity and repetition in the design. Circles of different sizes have been arranged in successive order from smaller to larger sizes to create movement, rhythm and depth in the design. The arrangement and flow of lines in the entire fabric also create movement and depth. Diamond shapes were achieved due to the motif arrangement in the design. Colour harmony is achieved through the use of matching colours such as light green coupled with dark brown on a white background.

The proverb teaches people to be content with what they have at hand rather than looking for things not belonging to them. It also signifies modesty which people have to adopt in life. The textured motifs portray gears which symbolize movement together with the undulated lines signify the reality of ups and down in life. The dominant green colour shades in the work signifies productivity, whereas the brown colour represents soil which portray agricultural identity of the Ewe people.

The batik fabric is suitable for shirt and dress wear. It can also be adopted for institutional, club or societal outing wear or uniforms.

5.3.2 Project Two

The project made use of three motifs derived from selected Ewe proverbs. The main motif was ideated from the proverb, “Ne lolɔsakɔ la menya tuna o” which literally means, when love knot up it is difficult to unfasten. The other two motifs were derived from “Fu kple dzidzo la nɔvi wo wonye” meaning, suffering and happiness are entwined, and “Agaga lolo me fle na agaga eve fe nu o” meaning, one big cowry cannot be used to pay for two cowries (fig.4.7). The main motif was constructed in relief but the others were drawn directly on the fabric with the help of pointed foam.



Plate 5.2: “Lòlòsako” [love knot]

Two yards of plain cotton fabric was used in executing this design. Circular sketch were made at the neckline and the “love knot” symbol sketched at both sides of the folded three yard cloth with a pencil. The pencil marks were resisted with molten wax using latex foam. The selvages of the fabric were resisted with the cowry motif stamp. After the wax work was completed the fabric was dyed in yellowish brown vat dye liquor in the proportion of $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of yellow dye and $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon brown dye. Selected portions in the fabric were waxed again after oxidation and drying. The fabric was then dyed in reddish violet vat dye for 15 minutes, removed for oxidation, rinsed, dewaxed, washed, dried and finally ironed. The result is shown in as in Plate 5.

2. Evaluation: “Lòlòsako” [Love knot]

Design in Plate 5.2 is titled “lòlòsako” meaning love knot. It depicts two abstract figures locked up in love. The project was done on a two yard plain cotton fabric. The “Ne lòlòsako la menya tuna o” and “Fu kple dzidzo la novi wo wonye” symbols were used in this particular project.

The brush effects on the background of the fabric portray straight horizontal lines, with a circular neckline around the cowry motif. The love knot symbol was sketched on both sides of the fabric. Along the selvedge depicts a linear arrangement of the suffering and happiness motif, creating a vertical line illusion. The fabric displays interplay of light brown and violet colours on a white background creating harmony. Curved and straight lines have been used to achieve femininity and masculinity of forms in the design. There is equal distribution of colours, lines and shapes creating symmetric balance in the design.

Holistically, the associated design was conceptualized to bring about issues concerning love. The cowry in the fabric design portrays wealth that couples need in their daily life situation such as food, shelter and clothing as the three basic necessity of life. The other motif “suffering and happiness are being intertwined” was also used to acknowledge the fact, life compasses both happiness and sadness seasons.

The dominant light brown colour in the design signifies the vast lands (earth) the Ewe used for their farming activities. The second dominant colour is violet which signifies the wealth, beauty, intelligence and rank among the Ewe people.

The work was designed in “bubu” mostly used by females and can be worn during social functions especially for church, funeral and parties.

5.3.3 Project Three

This project made use of the motif in (fig.4.11) “NuYequto me nyana be do to o” meaning the beggar do not know whether famine breaks out or not, as the main motif whereas the star motif was used in texturing the fabric. The main motif was arranged horizontally and intermittently at every other stamp size repeat of $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the width of the fabric. This was repeated to cover the fabric of two (2) yards with an interval of six (6) inches apart. The pattern arrangement was based on counter change utilization of both negative and positive areas.



Plate 5.3: “Nu Yequto” [The beggar]

The fabric after waxing was dyed in blue vat liquor. After dyeing the fabric was removed from the dye for oxidation and dried. Portions of the dried fabric were waxed again using the engraved wooden stamp to fill in-between the relief stamps. In-between the horizontally motifs was resisted with stamps made of engraved and relief motifs. Finally the fabric was dyed again in a brownish violet vat dye. The dye was mixed in the proportion of one (1) tablespoon of red and one (1) tablespoon of brown with the corresponding chemicals.

After the second dyeing the fabric was dewaxed, washed thoroughly in soapy water and rinsed. This was followed by drying and ironing to obtain the result shown in plate 5.3.

Evaluation: “Nu Yequto” [The beggar]

The design is titled “Nu Yequto” which means “the beggar”. The motif was constructed in both relief and engraved form for this project. The motif is made up of a semi-abstracted figure in half silhouette. The motif depicts a figure carrying food stuffs in the arms. The arrangements of lines and shapes as well as different shades of colours provide rhythm, variety, movements and dominance in the design. The background colour of the design is white on which reddish brown and blue colours have been applied to achieve solidity of forms. The figures and shapes in the work have been projected by the use of reddish brown colour. Harmony in colour has been created in the design by the use blue that matches with reddish brown and white background. The fabric is produced in batik techniques. The blue colour signifies harmony, righteousness, responsibility and spiritual sanctity.

The beggar was coined out of the proverb “Nu Yequto me nyana be do to o” (fig. 11), meaning the beggar never knows whether there is famine not. It acknowledges hard work and eschews laziness.

The batik is designed for shirt and dress fabrics. It can also be adopted by club or society as their dress code. It can also be used for table cloth.

5.4 Textile Print Designs

Photoshop is a type of CAD (Computer Aided Design) application software. It is a graphic editing tool and can be used to edit textile designs by utilizing the colour models RGB, CMYK, binary and bitmap. Photoshop have the ability to read and write raster image format such GIF, JPEG and firework (Wikipedia.org, 2000).

The Adobe Photoshop 7.0 application was used to copy, edit, create and manipulate the various motifs to arrive at the designs produced for the textile design prints for projects ten to thirteen.

5.4.1 Project Ten

Evaluation: koklokokoo [Dressing of chicken]

Plate 5.10 had its source from the proverb “Du sia du kple efe koklokokoo” which means, every town or country has its own way of killing a fowl. The design is titled “koklokokoo” i.e., the dressing of chickens.

The motif of five units was arranged to give a V-shape and then flipped over to create a diamond base pattern of which ten units form a unit pattern. The unit pattern was placed side by side with the ends touching each other. Four of the unit patterns coming together forms a diamond shape. It makes use of blue and light-brown as backing and outline colours.



Plate 5.10: koklokoko [Dressing of chicken]

The background exhibits bubble effects, with diagonal and horizontal lines as well as varied dots used as textures. The dark-brown, blue and orange colours depict harmony to balance the motifs arrangements; which shows the recurring effect of the motifs. The brown colour signifies nature, earth and the solid land on which the people live. The orange denotes confidence, creativity and fun lovers among the Ewe people. The blue also signifies responsibility, morality and spiritual sanctity demonstrated by the people.

The symbol was derived from the Ewe proverb “Du sia du kple efe koklokokoo” (fig.4.38). It portrays the behavioural nature of mankind which is seen from different perspective. This brings to mind the level of appreciation and humility. The design will be suitable for curtain, mummy cloth and shirting material.

5.4.2 Project Eleven

Evaluation: “Adeḡitsa” (Experience hunter)

Plate 5.11 is titled “**ḡitsa**” which means, experience was derived from the proverb “Adeḡitsa kple lāḡitsa ye do na go” translates an experienced hunter will surely meet a very experienced wild animal (fig.4.9). The motif was arranged in a diagonal pattern formation. The background comprises of diagonal and horizontal lines and dots used as textures. The dark-brown, light violet depicts harmony to balance the motifs arrangements; which shows the recurring effect of the motifs.



Plate 5.11: Ade ḡitsa [Experience hunter]

The work shows several repeats of a semi-abstract motifs arranged in a diagonal pattern. The motifs are in dark violet, but the background consists of light violet textured effects of a single claw reduced in size and repeated at the entire background of the design. The motifs and the textures are harmonised with the colours. The proverb teaches people not to boast of their achievements in life, but rather learn more from others since everyone has gone through life with various degrees of experiences. This also brings about the idea of sharing knowledge or experience with one another for the progress of the community. This concept emphasises on the importance of sharing ones experiences with people we come in contact with. This design will be suitable for mummy cloth, curtains, children and shirt materials.

5.4.3 Project Twelve

Evaluation: “Avuto” (Dog owner)

Plate 5.12 has the title “**Avuto**” meaning, the dog owner. It consists of a semi-abstract image of a dog head gabbing onto a fleshy tissue. The design is harmonised with shades of blue, wine and orange colours. The motifs are arranged in full drop in vertical and horizontal order. The motif is enclosed in a circle which is surrounded by a bubble wavy effect as textures. The overall texture is made of dots and circles in wine colour, creating

undulating horizontal lines with diamond shapes. Around the main motifs is formed a light blue ring of shadow creating a sense of colour harmony. The motif was derived from the proverb “Avu ɖunaa vuto” that is, a dog can bite its master. A dog is a humble and obedient creature but reacts unexpectedly when provoked.



Plate 5.12: Avuto [Dog owner]

The orange colour used for the design signifies confidence and creativity which is surrounded with a blue colour signifying responsibility, morality, coolness and of spiritual sanctity. The red which is composed of the main motif signifies heightened spirit, passion and struggle that can be observed or seen with the Ewe people. This obviously shows that one should be very responsible and alert not to provoke others, even their closest friends. For such act could bring quarrel between them. The design could be used as mummy cloth, shirting, curtains or table cloth.

5.4.4 Project Thirteen

Evaluation: “ɲkukɔ la” [The observer]

The design in Plate 5.13 is titled “ɲkukɔ la” that is, the observer. It is derived from the proverb “Koklotsu eve wo le adzre wɔm, gake wo le wonɔwofenku kpɔm” meaning, two cocks quarrelling are mindful of each other’s eye. The motif was arranged in a half drop pattern. It comprises two abstract cocks facing each other as the repeat unit. The unit repeat comprises of a large and small motifs alternating in half drop repeat pattern. The cream colour, dark brown and light purple colours harmonise well with the design.



Plate 5.13: “ɲkukɔ la” [The observer]

The design illustrates or symbolises friendship and togetherness. If such bond is broken the relation is also destroyed. It admonishes family or friends to be more careful not to hurt each other and break the trust that binds them together. The colours; cream, brown and reddish purple portray sacrifice or heightened spiritual mood. Passion is shown in the design through the use of red colour. The purple in the design signifies intelligence, wealth, beauty and high rank, whereas the brown symbolises the earth or the land they live on and sadness in times of losing a dear one. The design is suitable for “mummy” cloth, curtain design and table cover because of its regular repeat patterns, colour scheme and absence of textures.

5.0 MAJOR FINDINGS

The study has shown the possibilities of using Ewe proverbs to generate symbols which have served as motifs constructed on wooden and latex foam for the production of batik and textile print designs. The following findings were made during the construction of design blocks and production of the batik.

- a) Cutting of the design from wood was very difficult as compared to that of latex foam. However, the wood stamps gave definite patterns than the latex foam. Combination of designs from both the wooden and latex foam block surfaces gave unique results.
- b) The use of bristle brushes helped in creating flexible linear textured effects in the batik work. It created very thin lines in both the warp and weft ways of the design. Outstanding results were achieved when used in combination with the wooden stamps.
- c) It was observed that most of the symbols created were easily manipulated with the Adobe Photoshop Graphic software which allowed for the creation of highly aesthetic and colourful fancy and wax print designs. It was also noted that not all the symbols were applicable for textile designing due to their complexity of form.
- d) The symbols that are in abstract and semi-abstract forms were found to be user friendly, thus, easily applicable and suitable for the design works.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Proverbs are rich in meaning and when converted into imagery can be used for textile design and other art and craft works to promote one's culture to a greatest extent. The use of proverbial saying in textile products, as exemplified in this study, will go a long way in promoting Ghanaian culture to foster good moral standard of its citizenry. This is because proverbs do not only serve as the cream of the people's wisdom and historical material but also provide practical guidance in the life of a modern man. The study reveals the feasibility of generating symbols, imagery or motifs in both abstract and semi-abstract forms Ewe proverbs which can be used for batik and textile print designs. The success of the research provides a good platform for textile designers to explore in this novel source of motif generation to create vast variety designs for batik and textile prints to suit various purposes.

7.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested for consideration:

1. The researcher would liaise with the Department of Industrial Art to publish the finding of this report and copies made available to the various institutions and libraries to serve as educational and research material.
2. The forming of imagery from Ewe proverbs has been explored in this study; hence, it is recommended that other researchers and textile designers conduct further research in the area of study to unearth more designs for the growth and sustainability of the local textile industry.
3. This study also aimed at exposing students to proverbs as a source of motif generation to create more variety of designs with unique features to expand their scope of designing.
4. Textile designers should experiment with other methods and technique of dyeing and printing to bring varieties in the creation of textile designs using proverbs.

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